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BROWNING'S LETTERS

HOWARD LETTERS

LETTERS
FROM
ROBERT BROWNING
TO
VARIOUS CORRESPONDENTS.

Edited by Thomas J. Wise



UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

VOLUME TWO.

London: Privately Printed

1896

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ROBERT BRYAN

VERMONT RECORDS

1895

TO THE
RECORDS

1895

1895

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LETTERS.

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LETTERS
OF
ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER I.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

January 23rd, 1882.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I return Mr. Radford's letter with many thanks. I never heard nor dreamed there had been any such notion at any time of a Moorish Front for the Duomo—it was altogether a

fancy of my own illustrative of the feelings natural to Luria and Braccio each after his kind. As for *Aristophanes* — the allusions require a knowledge of the Scholia, besides acquaintance with the “Comicorum Græcorum Fragmenta,” Athenæus, Alciphron, and so forth, not forgotten. But I wrote in France, at an out of the way place, with none of these books.

How good you are, and how unable am I to do more than gratefully recognize it! I am reading Miss Lewis’s novel—have got through only the first volume, and like it much: my sister promises me that I shall like the second volume still more.

Ever yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER II.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

February 17th, 1882.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Pardon a delay in replying to your first note, which this second shall not have to apologize for.

If "B" has no sense of humour he ought to shut up poetical shop, or, better, never have opened it. The mistake grew out of a word on the want of sympathy and understanding he confessed to respecting "practical jokes," wherein he failed to see "humour" at all. He rather fancied

his love of humour led him into scrapes of indecorousness occasionally, when occupied on serious matters—who knows?

The little pamphlet* was printed by Arabel Barrett, for a Bazaar to benefit the “Refuge for young destitute girls” which she set going all those years ago—the first of its kind, I believe, and still in existence.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

* *Two Poems* | By | Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. | London: | Chapman & Hall, 193, Piccadilly. | 1854.—Octavo, pp. 15—Containing *A Plea for the Ragged Schools of London*, by Mrs. Browning; and *The Twins*, by Robert Browning.

The history of this little *brochure* certainly merits a place in the Romance of Bibliography. Although nominally published by Messrs. Chapman and Hall at the modest price of *Sixpence*, the whole of the issue was sent as a gift to the Bazaar held in aid of the funds of the Refuge for destitute girls. It is to be feared, however, that few copies found buyers, for the pamphlet became a rarity, and stray examples readily commanded three guineas. But the unsold copies had been preserved, and in 1887, thirty-three years after they had been printed, a parcel of them turned up in a London auction room. The number was considerable, and the bookseller into whose hands they fell advertised them in his catalogue at *Two Shillings*! At this price they were soon disposed of, and the value has now risen to some thirty shillings.

LETTER III.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

March 11th, 1882.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

The story of "Old Tod," as told in Bunyan's "Life and Death of Mr. Badman," was distinctly in my mind when I wrote *Ned Bratts*—at the Splugen, without reference to what I had read when quite a boy. I wrote *Ivan Ivanowitch* at the same place and altitude.

The "Saint" by "Haste - thee - Luke"; *i.e.* "Luca - fu - presto," as Luca Giordano was styled, somewhat

disparagingly, from his expeditious way of working.

No "bother"—so, no forgiveness from

Yours ever,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER IV.

To MR. JOHN H. INGRAM.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

May 18th, 1882.

DEAR MR. INGRAM,

I am truly sorry if my inability to render you the particular assistance * you might not unnaturally expect should have caused you any inconvenience ; a word to me, in the first instance, would have prevented this. You may not be aware that five brothers of my wife are still alive, and still to be considered in the matter

* "Assistance" in preparing the Monograph upon Elizabeth Barrett Browning, by J. H. Ingram, eventually published by Messrs. W. H. Allen and Co. in 1888.

which mainly concerns their family—though I confess that the feelings of my wife, perfectly known to me, render any attention to those of others superfluous.

Yours very truly,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER V.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

January 9th, 1883.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I have been overwhelmed with your kindnesses in these last weeks: the papers, the illustrations*—and now comes this really charming print.† I probably saw the original picture in a favourable *darkness*; it was blackened by taper-smoke,

* The Browning Society's *Papers and Illustrations*.

† A print of Guercino's *Angel and Child*, reproduced from the picture at Fano, as an illustration to Browning's *Guardian Angel*. This print was issued to the members of the Browning Society in *January, 1883*.

and one fancied the angel all but surrounded with cloud—only a light on the face. By the bye, that picture of Lippi's, mentioned by Mr. Radford, with the saints in a row, has—either *that* or its companion, the *Annunciation*, also in the National Gallery—the arms of the Medici above the figures; and in all likelihood both pictures were painted during Lippi's stay, enforced or otherwise, in the Medici Palace.

I have given, this afternoon, Smith my new book to print. It is a collection of things *gravish* and *gayish*—hence the title *Jocoseria*—which is Batavian Latin, I think. There are some eleven of these pieces, little and big; the main of them being the Deer-stalking poem, you remember, *Donald*—*Solomon and Balkis*—*Christina and Monaldeschi*—*Ixion*—*Mary Wollstonecraft and Fuseli*—and a long *Hakkadosch Jochanan*, a Rabbinical

story ; eleven pieces in all.* May some morsels of this Olla Podrida take your taste !

Ever truly yours, with belated but very sincere New Year wishes,

ROBERT BROWNING.

* As published *Jocoseria* contained ten pieces only, counting the prologue (*Wanting is—What ?*). It would be interesting to know what poem Mr. Browning originally included, and afterwards dropped from the series.

LETTER VI.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

April 10th, 1883.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I did indeed translate that little song for Mrs. Bell, never dreaming anybody would suppose there was "another hand" in her work. See now! I should have thought it very mean had I told anybody "that's mine!", and she herself unnecessarily tells it—from sheer honesty, I have no doubt, on somebody observing "what, you versify?"

You amuse me by what Mr. Garnett *

* Dr. Richard Garnett, of the British Museum.

proposes to do with that No. 9 of the *Railway Indicator*: we have all of us been obliged to him in our time. Will he accept for the Museum all the numbers I possess, from 1 to 18 inclusive, the missing links being No. 2, and that same No. 9 which he possesses? They shall be put aside here for you when you next please to call. I could send them, but, you may as well call!

Innocent XII. was not the first to be tolerant in that direction; but if his predecessor's clemency had been sufficient, there would have needed no supplementary "Bull" on the subject, you see! A Pope *adds* to the efficacy of another Pope's measure; does something on his own account.

I got an American paper, last night, wherein there is repeated that Jochanan revived by "a transfusion of blood." There is not a word about such a thing; on the contrary, the account in the poem makes it impossible. How could

the "transfusion" bring experiences with it? or how could the boy's gift, "which he threw and it stuck," be taken in that manner? This comes of the critics reading attentively the criticisms of their brethren, and paying no attention at all to the text criticized. The writer of the article in *The Times* made the mistake first, and even the *Academy* article must needs follow him. The whole story is a fiction of my own, with just this foundation, that the old Rabbins fancied that *earnest wishing* might add to a valued life. Could you say a word on the subject?

Ever yours,

R. BROWNING.

LETTER VII.

TO DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

April 15th, 1883.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

By all means, if Miss "Teena" kindly cares to come, bring her next Sunday, and don't be under any apprehension that we shall kill a fatted calf on your account or on hers. We shall as easily content you both as we shall ourselves be contented, and much more, by your visit.

My poor friend, Miss Haworth, was the first to call my attention, long ago, to the existence of the old ballad of

Johnnie Fad—which I was in total ignorance about when I wrote the poem some years before. There was an odd circumstance that either mended or marred the poem in the writing, I fancied the latter at the time. As I finished the line (which ends what was printed in *Hood's Magazine*) “and the old one—you shall hear!” I saw from the window where I sat a friend opening the gate to our house, one Captain Lloyd, whom I jumped up to meet, judging from the time of day that something especially interesting had brought him—as proved to be the case, for he was in a strange difficulty. This took a deal of discussing. Next day other interruptions occurred, and the end was I lost altogether the thing as it was in my head at the beginning, and, subsequently, gave it to Hood as a fragment. Some time afterwards I was staying at Bettisfield Park, in Wales, and a guest, speaking of early winter,

said "the deer had already to break the ice in the pond." A fancy struck me, which, on returning home, I worked up into what concludes the story—which originally all grew out of this one intelligible line of a song that I heard a woman singing at a bon-fire Guy Faux night when I was a boy—*Following the Queen of the Gypsies, O!* From so slender a twig of fact can these little singing birds start themselves for a flight to more or less distances.

Ever yours,

R. BROWNING.

LETTER VIII.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

HÔTEL DELAPIERRE,
GRESSONEY ST. JEAN,
VAL D'AOSTA, ITALIA.
September 17th, 1883.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Let me first of all get rid of a trifle on my mind ; and yet no trifle if it indicated carelessness on my part, as it might seem to do.

In my hurry to send off an answer to your letter I got some stamps from the people of the house, and, by candle-light, the proper *blue* was undistinguish-

able from the *green*—one fifth of the proper value. I had stamped and despatched my letter when the mistake was discovered, which *you* have been mulcted for.* You will forgive the blunder, which I was sufficiently sorry about.

Your new letter is very affecting, and the portion of it which relates to myself, well, I don't know whether it pains or gratifies me the more. It is useless to consider; if those little endeavours to please were so successful, how willingly would one have redoubled or centupled them! As to the wish of the poor parents that I should write something on the sad subject, all I can say is, if such an exceptional experience should happen to me as that I could put the feelings I am undoubtedly full of into verse which should be worthy of the name, I

* Amusingly enough, the error was unobserved by the postal officials, who did not surcharge the letter.

should hardly require an instigation from the outside to do so. But in the two or three great sorrows of my life it has been the last thing that occurred to me. *Incidentally*, I am quite sure, and as I told you, this dreadful accident will have its influence more or less remarkably on what I write. I should hate any mechanical attempt to do what would only acquire worth from being a spontaneous outflow. Understand all this; indeed, I know you will; but tell the amount of it to the parents with whom I sympathize from my inmost heart.*

My sister again desires to condole with you in all sincerity. We purpose remaining here for at least another week, after which, as the weather may

* The reference is to the death of Miss Teena (Mary Lilian) Rochford Smith, who died at Goole on *September 4th*, 1883, from the effects of burns received six days earlier, her dress having caught fire whilst she was engaged in extinguishing a lighted work-basket. A *Memoir* of her (pp. 16, with several portraits—including one of Robert Browning) was written, and printed privately by Dr. Furnivall.

allow, we shall descend into the lowlands and move towards Venice, where we hope to arrive about the 1st of *October*. The weather continues surprisingly fine for the place and time of year.

Ever affectionately yours,
ROBERT BROWNING.

I return the melancholy newspaper account.

LETTER IX.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

GRESSONEY ST. JEAN,
VAL D'AOSTA, ITALY.

September 29th, 1883.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Six weeks in this delightful solitude, with one day only to prevent our * leaving the house! On every other morning and afternoon we have walked right and left, never less and often more than five hours a day—and the good to us both, I hope, certainly to myself, is in proportion. At Venice we shall be social, however, and I cannot expect to return with as florid a pair of cheeks

* Mr. Browning and his sister.

as I occasionally get glimpses of in the glass.

That was indeed a—*Godsend*, is hardly the appropriate word, to Dowden, whom I never cease wishing well to. I wonder if he has had access to the correspondence of the first Mrs. Shelley with—what was the bookseller's name, he of Bond Street, Shelley's intimate friend? * He put them into my hands, and a very decided impression they left with me, the reverse of what I had been prepared for by the biographers of Shelley. Hookham (where was my memory?) offered them to me unreservedly on the only occasion of our interview, and they are all-important for a right view of the case as between wife and husband; the latter being, I hold, at that time of his life half crazy and wholly inexcusable.†

* Thomas Hookham, Jun.

† In 1885 Mr. Browning was offered the Presidentship of the Shelley Society, which he declined, his ground for refusal being that he could not possibly

So to Venice, if weather allow, for we *walk* the first six hours of the descent; and there, and everywhere, remember me as

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

approve of Shelley's conduct towards Harriet—his judgment, a somewhat severe one, being chiefly influenced by the perusal of the letters referred to above.—
See *post*, letter dated "*December 8th*, 1885."

LETTER X.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

PALAZZO GIUSTINIAN-RECANATI,
VENICE.

October 15th, 1883.

Better not, my dear Furnivall, for it is in the lazy blood of the whole people, and telling them of their faults rather saddens than irritates them, besides doing no sort of good. Everybody who can block up a window, brick over a moulding, or other apparently useless ornament, does so ; or, better, disposes of it—a balcony, well, or such like fixture—to the Jew antiquity-mongers. It is really an argument against the throwing open museums and galleries

to the people on Sundays that here, where the works which glorify such institutions were originally produced, and where similar excellences may be still seen every day, the inhabitants have the worst taste in the whole world. I believe that remonstrating with the pig-headed authorities here would merely confirm them in their obstinate determination to Liverpoolize Venice. Let them be, poor pigs with the devil in them !

I wrote a word or two to Dowden, and have no doubt he may get at the letters if he tries ; they cannot well have been destroyed.

I never saw that book of Powell's to which you allude, and should refuse to accept a line of it as true, unless I *did* see it, the author being a person of infamous character, an unparalleled forger, who only escaped transportation through the ill-deserved kindness of his employers ; and who, premeditating a

defence of "inborn and ineradicable dishonesty," actually practised forging on every possible occasion,—would send you, for instance, a letter signed "Dickens" or "Thackeray." I heard he had libelled me, who found him out earlier than most of his dupes. Dickens says something about him in the last collection of Letters.

The brilliant weather continues. We arrived eleven days ago, eleven perfect days have we had, yet I see that Venice is "drenched with rain"—that is, in the newspaper.

I break off, being wanted, but am

Ever affectionately yours,

R. BROWNING.

I shall be happy to read the new Seeley book, but at home. Do not take the trouble of sending it. While here, I take the opportunity of reading what I cannot so easily get elsewhere.

LETTER XI.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

VENICE.

December 3rd, 1883.

My DEAR FURNIVALL,

I have lingered and lingered, but so far believe now that I am really going at last, that I write to beg you to send whatever needs be to 19 Warwick Crescent, as I hope to be there in the middle of next week. To-day completes the fourth Calendar month of my absence from England—two of them spent here, with only one rainy day!

I take the word “apparitional” to mean what Mr. Erlebach supposes—“the ghost-like gliding of hospital attendants”—and no classical allusion at all.

They are going to unveil and display here a monument erected to Goldoni, and the Committee did me the honor to request a word or two for insertion in an Album to which the principal men of letters in Italy have contributed. I made a sonnet, which they please to think so well of that they preface the work with it.* I cannot stop for the ceremony, but shall get and let you have a proof—surely the Director's Due!

The weather continues wonderful. I shall be glad, however, to see London and my friends again.

Ever yours affectionately,

ROBERT BROWNING.

My sister sends her kind regards. I write in a hurry, our determination to leave, next Saturday, having only just been taken.

* This sonnet was printed in *The Pall Mall Gazette*, Dec. 8, 1883. It is included in no edition of its author's writings.

LETTER XII.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

April 25th, 1884.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I don't see that, because a clown's conception of the laws of the Heavenly bodies is grotesque and impossible, that of Newton must be necessarily as absurd ; or that the writer of *La Saisiaz* must see through such horny eyes as those of Caliban : besides, in each case, there is a faculty of reason which should be employed in correcting and adjusting the first impressions of the senses—and, I hope, the two make a

very different use of their respective faculties; one doubts and the other has no doubt at all, "sayeth" so and so, as if Prospero could say no otherwise. Then, as to the divergence from Shakespeare's Caliban—is it so decided? There is no "forgetfulness of his love for music," since he makes a song and sings it; nor of his "visions of Heaven," for he speculates on what goes on there; nor of his resolve to "learn wisdom and such grace," seeing that he falls flat and loveth Setebos, and was a fool to gibe at a Power he had miscalculated. True, "he was a very different being at the end of the Play from what he was at its beginning"—but my Caliban indulges his fancies long before even that beginning. All the same, "fire away!"

I have hardly had a minute, of late, to be quiet in. My son is here, Milsand is here also; and I have been away, as you know, and much engaged in matters

of a teasing nature about—well, let me forget them! Your young lady was abundantly welcome to the song. I hope to see you on Sunday, of course.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XIII.

TO DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

VILLA BERRY,
ST. MORITZ, SWITZERLAND.

September 28th, 1884.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

We leave for London next Wednesday, *October 1st*, and count upon arriving there in a couple of days; so that if you are in Town, and charitably minded, you will come and "batten on cold bits" with us this day week, and hear all our news. We had not been here a fortnight when our kind hostess was summoned to America, to her great vexation. Imperative as the summons was, she only obeyed it on condition of

our remaining her guests to the end of our visit's natural term; and we have done so. There was no avoiding the quarantine established at all the Italian passes till a short while ago, and long before then (our beloved Mrs. Brownson being at Kreuznach, and, similarly shut out apparently from return, determined to go on to Paris and London) our mind was accordingly made up to forgo Venice and return to London when return needed to be. Two days since the wonderful friend telegraphed to us that she should greatly prefer changing her plans, going back to Venice, and receiving us there, "if we did not fear the cholera." The cholera, above all, at Venice where, I believe, it has never yet entered, does not frighten us at all—but the notion of our friend's making such a sacrifice on our account was unendurable, and we keep to our determination. There are also many matters which want attending to personally in

London ; and our seven weeks here have passed so profitably that we must be content without the usual Italian supplement.

Nothing could exceed the delightfulness of the weather. I write at this moment (not 9 A.M.) in a blaze of sunshine which I shrink from at the unluckily most convenient table in the room. And so it has been uninterruptedly for the last two weeks ; not a symptom of cloud in the blue to-day. Yet the "season" is over long ago, the hotels are shut up, and the place deserted mostly. We have walked every day, morning and evening—afternoon, I should say—two or three hours each excursion, the delicious mountain air surpassing any I was ever privileged to breathe. My sister is absolutely herself again, and something over : I was hardly in want of such doctoring.

Well, I saw an advertisement, in

last week's *Saturday Review*, of my new Poem *—somewhat to my surprise, for there are reasons for keeping back the publication for at least a week or two. My part is done, however, and the last corrected “proofs” are at the printers. I can't at all guess how people will like it, but I have managed to say a thing or two that I “fancied” I should like to say.

Since I began this I have walked on and up the mountain for three hours. The splendour of the day is indescribable. To be sure, you have a fine St. Martin, by all accounts, and so much the better! But you cannot have the air of these altitudes, nor, alas, can I—next week! It would have been pleasant to feel oneself gradually *let down* into the winter by a two-months' sojourn in Venice.

My sister sends her kindest regards.

* *Ferishtah's Fancies*, published in the autumn of 1884.

She, at all events, will witness your
great doings in November.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XIV.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

HÔTEL DELAPIERRE,
GRESSONEY ST. JEAN,
VAL D'AOSTA, ITALY.
September 7th, 1885.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I was just going to thank you for your pleasant letter from the Moors when your second arrived. I will begin with the proposal in the latter.

Certainly nobody will ever treat of my wife and myself more graciously and partially (if that is desirable at all) than you; so, by all means biographize about both of us. For my own part, I will do what I can in the talk over the

matter that is to be. I have nothing to keep back, and will answer any question to the best of my power. But in the other case, the little I confidently can profess to *know* I am forced to be silent about ; and how very little that little is appears extraordinary to me, and may seem almost incredible to anybody else. The personality of my wife was so strong and peculiar that I had no curiosity to go beyond it, and concern myself with matters which she was evidently disinclined to communicate. I believe I discovered her birthday—the day, not the date—three weeks ago, when engaged in some search after missing letters. But I can set right certain errors which appear in the printed notices that I have seen. Any help in that way, which is in my power to give, I will give you readily.

I rejoice that your Yorkshire visit was so successful. You speak of bad or indifferent weather ; ours here has

been, and continues, all we could desire. We are all but alone, the brief "season" being over, and only a chance traveller turning up for a fortnight's lodging. We take our walks in the old way; two and a half hours before breakfast, three after it, in the most beautiful country I know. Yesterday the three hours passed without our meeting a single man, woman, or child; one man only was discovered at a distance at the foot of a mountain we had climbed.

Yes, I am writing another poem. It may give you a notion of this place when I tell you that on the 17th of last January an avalanche destroyed two houses close to this Hotel, and a third on the other side of it, crushing six people at their morning meal, one child escaping through a couple of beams falling cross-wise over her head. The snow lay four *mètres* deep, so effectually blocking up the Hotel that it was two days before the inhabitants

became aware of what had happened. They had provisions enough, but were reduced to melted snow and ice, which kept cows and a mule alive. The Doctor and the Priest were imprisoned in the house, having sought shelter there.

I did not know that Pen's projected trip was so notably recorded in the papers. He leaves Dinant for Venice at the end of this week, takes a studio there, and tries his hand at something different, I hope, from the conventional work. Did I tell you of the success of his *Dryope* at the Paris Salon, where it obtained a *mention honorable*—a great distinction for sculpture in the best sculpture-producing country? They proceed grade by grade there, and this is all he could hope for as yet. Please do not, in your kindness, mention this, which I am glad to have never seen in print. The *Academy* is unfriendly enough without need of further exasperation !

I suppose we shall stay here till the end of the month. One good storm, with thunder, threatened to break up the genial autumn's beginning (for it is no more than that, we have greenness everywhere), but it only deposited snow on the mountain tops, and left a sky bluer than ever.

Good-bye, dear Furnivall; my sister summons me—taking occasion to send her best regards. I rose at half past five, and am ready for our walk. Do write whenever the happy mood is upon you; your letters are cheery to us both. Don't think I forget to wish your son a triumphant cycling. And believe me

Always most truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XV.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

VENICE.

November 17th, 1885.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I find that at last I can get away and go home—as I hope to do next Monday ; arriving thus in London two or three days after. I write at once to apprise you of this, knowing that your good nature would prompt you to give me an account of *Colombe*—which account, if despatched on Friday, as it needs must be, would reach Venice on Monday, and so fail of reaching myself. Address whatever news, good or bad,

there may be, to the London place,* and I will read it gratefully the moment I arrive—probably on Wednesday.

“The London Place”: well, your friendliness now must know that I have been kept thus long here by the business of buying a Venice Palace, the Manzoni Palazzo, of which you may see an account in the Guide Books. I think, with many or most of them, that it is the most beautiful house—not the biggest nor most majestic—in Venice. I buy it solely for Pen, who is in love with the City beyond anything I could expect, and had set his heart on this particular acquisition before I joined him, quite unaware that I had entertained a similar preference for it years ago. Don’t think I mean to give up London till it warns me away; when the hospitalities and innumerable delights grow a burden, even as we are

* “The London place,” *i.e.* 19, Warwick Crescent, W.

assured the grasshopper will eventually do in the case of the stoutest of us. Pen will have sunshine and beauty about him, and every help to profit by these, while I and my sister have secured a shelter when the fogs of life grow too troublesome. We cannot enter into possession for some months, and Pen returns in our company to resume work in Paris. I should have mentioned that I was in the thick of this affair of a purchase but that the owner was abroad, and I needed to first negotiate with him in person ; and, oh the slips between cups and lips ! so that I closed mine till the cup's last contents were fairly inside them.*

What sort of weather are you having to-day ? We walked two hours just now, with abundance of sunshine, a

* The vendor of the Palazzo Manzoni afterwards drew back, as he thought he could get more for the Palace. Browning went to law with him to make him carry out his contract ; but afterwards, being informed that the main walls—hidden by carpets, &c., when he saw them—were cracked, and the foundations shaky, Browning gave up, paid his own costs, and retired.

blue sky, and a bracing wind—pronounced by our servant to be “stupendously cold.” Pen—who drops in while I write—sends his best regards, and congratulations on the successes of your son,* which he appreciates as a connoisseur should.

My sister joins me in the hope of soon a pleasant meeting. So does Pen, for he too, is only minded to stay here occasionally; by no means to detach himself from the England of us all—and assuredly of

Yours truly ever,

ROBERT BROWNING.

* Mr. Percy Furnivall, champion amateur cyclist.

LETTER XVI.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

December 8th, 1885.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

You are, as always, very good in wishing to invest me with new honours, but the acceptance of this last is impossible; it would be tantamount to a profession of belief that what the Browning Society has done so helpfully in my case—mine, who stood in need of it—should now be repeated in the case of Shelley who, for years, has tasked the ingenuity of his admirers to leave no scrap of his writing

nor incident of his life without its illustration by every kind of direct or cross light—not, I very much suspect, to the advantage of either. For myself, I painfully contrast my notions of Shelley the *man* and Shelley, well, even the *poet*, with what they were sixty years ago, when I only had his works, for a certainty, and took his character on trust.

Moreover, I am frightened, just a moment after reading your proposal, by learning that I was last night “unanimously elected Honorary President of the University of Edinburgh in the room of Lord Bury—see *The Times* of to-day. No hint of such an intention had reached me. What is expected of such a President I have no notion; and, if anything more is required than the thanks for the honour, that honour will be assuredly declined.

I shall not say a word about my feeling in your case; you know it.

Remember we expect you and your son next Sunday. I returned, at 2 p.m., from Cambridge; the playing was admirably done.

Ever yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XVII.

TO MR. THOMAS J. WISE.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

March 3rd, 1886.

DEAR MR. WISE,

You are certainly right, and I spoke too hastily on a very imperfect recollection, for I afterwards did remember having heard that some such poem* was in existence. "Hope End" was built as well as inhabited by Mr. Barrett, and the other circumstances men-

* *The Battle of Marathon*, Mrs. Browning's first book, of which fifty copies were privately printed by her father in 1820. Of these fifty copies only *four* are known to have survived; one of these four was sold by public auction in New York on *January 30th*, 1895.

tioned in your letter are conclusive enough.

Believe me, dear Mr. Wise,

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT BROWNING.

As for the early editions of Shelley. They were obtained for me some time before 1830 (or even earlier) in the *regular way*, from Hunt and Clarke, in consequence of a direction I obtained from the *Literary Gazette*. I still possess *Posthumous Poems*, but have long since parted with *Prometheus Unbound*, *Rosalind and Helen*, *Six Weeks' Tour*, *Cenci*, and the *Adonais*.* I got at the same time nearly, *Endymion* and *Lamia*, &c., just as if they had been purchased a week before, and not years after the death of Keats!†

* The Pisa *Adonais*, Mr. Browning told me one day, he lent to Thomas Powell—who promptly sold it! The book is now worth, in such state, some fifty guineas, and even at that time commanded a considerable sum.

† See *Robert Browning Personalia*, by Edmund Gosse, 1890, pp. 23-24.

LETTER XVIII.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

May 12th, 1886.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Congratulations, first and foremost, on your victory of Monday*—and your smart letter in the *Pall Mall*, the day before. In each case the “scull” has been well employed, and whether better employed in “rōwing” or “rōwing” is a moot point.

Next, I am heartily glad if my little

* *Victory*.—The first Sculling Fours race in narrow boats in England, held by the Maurice (*i.e.* Working Men's College) Rowing Club. Dr. Furnivall was No. 3 in the winning boat, and wears a prize-medal upon his watch-chain in commemoration of the event.

word of appreciation gave any pleasure to the lady we are so much indebted to. You see the charge of inflicting boundless *ennui* on the audience is insisted on in the *World*—"It shall to the barber's with the critic's beard: he's for a jig or, &c., or he sleeps"—I daresay.

By the way, you spoke of making use of my *Essay* for the Society, and also of the little poem. If you can do any good with the *Cenciaja* it is at your service, of course.

I am ashamed at the objection taken by some of the critics to the Eve-like simplicity of Pen's peasant-girl, who before going on to saintliness (which the Church still withholds from her) was satisfied with the proverbially next step to it—cleanliness.* If they knew anything of Joan's habits even when

* *Pen's* [*i.e.* Mr. Robert Barrett Browning's] *Eve-like Peasant-Girl*.—A picture by Mr. R. Barrett Browning, representing Joan of Arc standing naked by a pool of water.

advanced in her saintly career, they would remember she was no prude by any means. Her favoured young cavalier, the Duc d'Alençon, mentions that he had frequently seen her undress, and that "*aliquando videbat ejus mammas quæ pulchræ erant*"—in his very words.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XIX.

To MR. THOMAS J. WISE.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT, W.
July 6th, 1886.

MY DEAR MR. WISE,

I hardly know what you may be thinking of my negligence and indeed want of common gratitude—but when I tell you how it has happened that your kind present has been so long unacknowledged I feel sure that I shall right myself in your eyes. My sister has been dangerously ill—is only just convalescent — and while our anxiety was at the height, I conjecture by the date of your letter which accompanied the parcel, the parcel

itself was laid away, with several others, for subsequent examination, for I supposed it was an ordinary book. Judge of my confusion when I find that the present was so valuable, and yours beside. I can only thank you exceedingly, and assure you that, on every account, I trust that no communication from you, of whatever the nature, will be kept waiting thus unworthily a second time.

If it really *does* interest you to have my statement "in black and white," I willingly repeat that to the best of my belief no single copy of the original edition of *Pauline* found a buyer; the book was undoubtedly "stillborn,"—and that despite the kindly offices of many friends, who did their best to bring about a successful birth.

Believe me, with repeated thanks,

Dear Mr. Wise,

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XX.

To Dr. F. J. FURNIVALL.

July 20th, 1886.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

In the Royalist rhymes entitled *Vanity of Vanities, or Sir Harry Vane's Picture*, wherein Vane is charged with being a Jesuit, occur these lines:—

“’Tis said they will give him a Cardinal’s
hat
They sooner will give him an old nun’s
twat!”

The ballad is partly quoted in the Appendix to Forster’s *Life of Vane*, but the above lines are left out. I remember them, however, and the word struck me as a distinctive part of

a nun's attire that might fitly pair off with the cowl appropriated to a monk. To "twattle" was used for "tattle" sometimes—as in Croxhall's *Fables*, where the birds that object to carrying the tortoise who is to hold a stick in his mouth, do so because "he will be twattling"—and let it go thereby.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXI.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

HAND HOTEL,
LLANGOLLEN, N. WALES.

September 6th, 1886.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I had thought to say something before this of our stay here, and the good effect it continues to have on my sister's health—but the object of this letter is different indeed. I should be sorry if you heard incidentally from another than myself that my friend Milsand died two days ago—on the 4th, at his place, Villers la Faye, in the Cote d'Or. We had been long aware of his declining health ; and the last letter,

of *August* 28, spoke of increasing bodily weakness, "the head remaining strong." We were unprepared for what has followed so fast, and which we are apprised of by a telegram this morning.

It is due to your kindness to say this much.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXII.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

HAND HOTEL,
LLANGOLLEN, N. WALES.

September 12th, 1886.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Often enough, or too much, you have said kind things of me, done kind things to me, and if I have not in every case straightway told you how I was impressed by your kindness it has been through a confidence that you would understand easily how, while feeling much, one seems to need little speaking. This time, however, you have so thrilled me through with gratitude for your notice of Milsand that I am as willing as able to thank

you from my heart. You did all I could wish in the way of sobriety and succinctness as well as adequate recognition and handsome appreciation—adequate for the “public”—who will never know what only an intimate of thirty-five years knows and never will attempt to put into words. Your notice was so excellently devised, you see, that *The Times* at once transferred it to its columns, so giving it all the circulation desirable. I sent it to Ma^{de} Milsand, and others will of course see what they would have probably missed. I do not “inform” you that Milsand liked you greatly, little as was the intercourse between you permitted by circumstances—your own penetration and sympathy must have divined that.

Truest thanks once again and
always from

Yours affectionately,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXIII.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

December 13th, 1886.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I return Alma Murray's letter with great regret that she should have been obliged to write it. Tell her how sensible I am of her goodwill in the matter, and how thoroughly she is justified in not attempting an impossibility.

Do not you think this is a very

proper occasion for postponing the representation? *

You see the judicious remarks of the critic in this morning's *Daily News*: not a doubt as to whether the bankrupt management of that day did what was requisite for the success of the piece, whether the wretched acting of the inferior people might not have done harm (a stone-deaf Charles, a silly, simpering Carlisle, &c.), and whether the management "that dressed the Scots Commissioners in kilts" might not refuse, as it did, "one rag for the new piece." The only conclusion to draw is that a play which did not obtain the enthusiastic praise of the critics then, cannot deserve a better fate now, under quite other conditions. I would strongly advise that you run no such risk, but let a thing which has so long lain dormant, sleep a little

* The representation of *Strafford*, which was revived by the Browning Society at the Strand Theatre on the 21st of *December*, 1886.

longer. Of course I do not know what the engagements are, and whether it is not too late to recede, but surely with the loss of Alma Murray goes the last chance of a gratifying result.

In haste, but ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXIV.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

19, WARWICK CRESCENT,
LONDON, W.

March 4th, 1887.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Don't trouble yourself about Smart on my account—unnecessarily, since, after nearly fifty years, I remember the whole pretty well. I think it was the reprint in Chambers that I saw—not in Chalmers; indeed I am sure of it, although I discovered it there on an occasion that would excuse much mistiness in my memory. Depend upon it, no goody-goody writer ever

conceived or executed the stanzas I could repeat—as I did, with all the effect I supposed would follow—to people of authority enough : Tennyson, the present Bishop of London, and, last year to Wendell Holmes, who had asked me innocently at Oxford, “whether I knew the wonderful poem.”* Weak passages there undoubtedly are, but the strong ones are decisive as to Smart’s power and right of place. You hear what Rossetti thought and said ; I was not aware of it.

I am surprised at an edition appearing so early as in 1819 ; that which I bought professed to be just out some years later.

“ *O Lyric Love.* ”

“ Human ”—so as to be *ready*, at the

* Christopher Smart’s *Song to David*. It was first published in 1763 ; reprinted, in 1819, by the Rev. R. Harvey ; and last year—1895—Mr. David Stott, of 370 Oxford Street, issued a pocket edition of it. For a Browning reminiscence about this poem see *Gossip in a Library*, by Edmund Gosse, p. 198.

first summons to general service, to drop down &c. ; the *readiness* implied as a necessary quality of the humanity.

Ever yours,

R. BROWNING.

LETTER XXV.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

VILLA BERRY,
ST. MORITZ, SWITZERLAND.

August 21st, 1887.

What do you think, dear Cyclist?
We are "snowed up" this morning;
cannot leave our house to go to the
Hotel opposite, close by, where we get
our meals! Such is Alpine treatment
of travellers! Our amends is in the
magnificence of the mountain, and its
firs black against the universal white.
The natives assure us that this little
summer-interlude only heralds a par-
ticularly fine September; and so it may,
let us hope, for both my sister and

myself have greatly benefited by our month's stay in these altitudes.

So you, for your part, have managed to enhance the enjoyment of your holiday by an oversight—damaged wrist, and so forth! When I read in a newspaper that an adventurous somebody had chosen to skate down a steep incline and break his neck, I thought of Dr. Furnivall literally riding his hobby to death, and ruining the Browning Society—a climax only equalled by one I had from the mouth of my old piano-forte master, Abel: said he “Yes, I am in love; it destroys my appetite, interferes with my sleep, and considerably breaks in upon my practising.”

But to brighter matters. I had not been here a week before I was altogether my old self with perhaps an addition; quite well: and my sister, who needed rest and change far more than I, profited conspicuously. We had three

perfect weeks of blue sky and living air ; last Sunday the weather broke up, but mended next day. Some days ago we were surprised by an earthquake, so those say who felt it past mistake, and they are in such a number that one cannot doubt it, I suppose. To-day comes exactly such a snow-storm as I happened to read of this morning in the *Iliad*, the only book I brought with me ; but Homer expressly makes it fall on a winter's day, while we are in mid-August. I shall stay, I hope, a week or two longer.

Oh, for your subject—the young lady stripping for humanity's sake, or rather that of the Blue-Ribbon Cause.* Really it is not versifiable—sufficient to the deed is the prose description thereof. Besides, since she could swim a mile with ease, the reward of the feat

* A fisherman agreed to take the pledge if the lady, who pressed him to do it, would strip like Godiva and swim to him.

was surely in itself during the hot weather of last month :

*“Accoutred as she was not, plunging in,
She watered, so to speak, the boatman’s gin.”*

The days glide away uneventfully, *nearly*, and I breathe in the pleasant idleness at every pore. I have no few acquaintances here — nay, some old friends—but my intimates are the firs on the hill-side, and the myriad butterflies all about it, every bright wing of them under the snow to-day, which ought not to have been for a fortnight yet. Moral : flutter out your own life while you can, and don’t crush it with the “wheels” !

My sister sends a cordial greeting, and I am

Ever affectionately yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXVI.

TO DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

VILLA BERRY,
ST. MORITZ, SWITZERLAND.

August 30th, 1887.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

You forget that I know nothing of Brown or of his book.* All I take for granted is that he is poor and meritorious in his endeavours, whatever may be the worth of his attainment—on the strength of which knowledge I will at once write and press his claims,

* Henry Brown, a poor fellow who wrote on Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. He had been a working-man, and a newsvendor. He wrote to, and probably saw, Mr. Browning, who asked Dr. Furnivall to take up his case. Applications for a money grant were made to the Government, to the Trustees of the Royal Literary Fund, etc., but without success.

if you will be kind enough to state them succinctly : his age, condition, experiences in life, literary labours, and the fruit of it all, such as it is—which *you* can do, and I cannot by any means. Let me have such a summary of work done, and I will let Lytton have it “with what flourishes I may” ; Lytton, the intended backer-up of my petition, being altogether as ignorant on the subject as I. If we simply prayed “Give Brown a sum of money,” we should “sure to be despised.”

I did not think of the mere feat of the lady when I wrote ; is it so wonderful ? I think I could have managed it once upon a time, but I gave up swimming because of a peculiar affection of the throat—real strangulation—if the salt water got into it ; and I rather aimed at long continuance in the sea, than going away from shore. Pen could have performed the feat with ease. But I thought your approbation

went to the fact that Miss MacNaughten stripped and swam to win over a sottish fellow to leave his bestiality, and I hold that if he were unamenable to the ordinary reasons why he should cease to make a beast of himself, his life was not worth saving at any price ; and I, for my part, would have refused “accoutred as I was, to plunge in”—unless I bade him follow, sure that he would go to the bottom. Such a fellow, after exacting such a sacrifice, would be sure to get drunk the next day on the strength of his having made a fool of her.

Our weather is glorious. I shall probably move off in a week to Raugatz, but—Here is an interruption, a visitor, “but none in the affection I bear to” (old style, wanting to us moderns !)

Kind genial paper, that you sent me !

Ever yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXVII.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

29, DE VERE GARDENS,
LONDON, W.

February 17th, 1888.

DEAR FURNIVALL,

Very glad to hear we shall have you on Sunday week.

As for the "Trial," everybody I have seen takes the right view of the subject.

The "Correspondent" may complete his answer to objections by mentioning that, in *Holy Cross Day*, Ben Ezra is not supposed to acknowledge Christ as the Messiah because he resorts to the obvious argument "even

on your own showing, and accepting for the moment the authority of your accepted Lawgiver, you are condemned by His precepts—let alone ours.”

I shall do my best to be present at the Play. I wish Pen would accompany me, and bring his wife. Excellent news of her, three days ago.

Yours truly ever,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXVIII.

TO MR. WALTER B. SLATER.

29, DE VERE GARDENS,
LONDON, W.

February 22nd, 1888.

DEAR MR. SLATER,

In reply to your kind letter, I may say that I certainly shall be present, if possible, at a performance* got up with so much generous trouble and expense of every sort. If you can reserve the smallest of the boxes for my sister and myself we shall be much obliged to you. I am not aware, at this moment, of any friend whom I could recommend to

* The performance of *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon* at the Olympic Theatre on March 18th, 1888. Mr. Browning was present upon the occasion.

your obliging attention ; but if I should hear of one who both desires and deserves a ticket, I will avail myself of your goodness.

I never have seen Miss Alma Murray in any play but the *Cenci*—wherein her acting was most admirable. I shall be highly interested in whatever she can do for my piece.

Believe me, Dear Mr. Slater,

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXIX.

To MR. W. G. KINGSLAND.

29, DE VERE GARDENS

LONDON, W.

June 15th, 1888.

MY DEAR KINGSLAND,

There is not a word of truth in the passage you have the kindness to send me. I never at any time had the least notion of writing my "Reminiscences," nor ever shall do so; consequently the other "account" is not likely to be furnished. The stanza quoted is from my poem of *The Statue and the Bust*, towards the end.

It will give me, and give my sister, great pleasure to see you whenever you

are able to call. I spend next week at Oxford—though that circumstance needs not interfere with your calling, after the 23rd.

We are both of us quite well, and hope that you and all your family are in good health likewise. With best regards to them and to you,

Believe me,

Affectionately yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXX.

To MR. THOMAS J. WISE.

29, DE VERE GARDENS,
LONDON, W.

August 1st, 1888.

DEAR MR. WISE,

The *Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point* was given by its author to the Boston *Liberty Bell*, and was afterwards comprised in the collective edition of Chapman and Hall, 1850.

I never heard of a separate publication, and am pretty certain such a circumstance never happened. I fear that this must be a fabricated affair, and, moreover, *have* a doubt whether the *Battle of Marathon*, of which I

never have seen a copy, may not be a fabrication also. As the poem (*The Runaway Slave*) was first printed in America, no copyright could be claimed for it in England. It is possible some of the "friends of Freedom" may have used a certain "freedom" in reprinting the poem, for the sake of the good cause, nor thought proper to refer to the author at all.

Believe me, Dear Mr. Wise,
Yours very sincerely,
ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXXI.

To MR. THOMAS J. WISE.

29, DE VERE GARDENS,
LONDON, W.

August 3rd, 1888.

DEAR MR. WISE,

I daresay the fact has been that, on the publication of the Poem in America, the American friends (in London) who had been instrumental in obtaining it, wrote to the Authoress (in Florence) for leave to republish it in England, and that she of course gave her consent—probably wrote the little advertisement. The respectability of the Publisher and Printer is a guarantee that nothing surreptitious has been done. You may

observe that no price is affixed, and no advertisements are to be found on the cover,—the pamphlet was clearly a private issue for “friends.” The appearance of the pamphlet* convinces me that things were as I say.

I possess a copy of the *Liberty Bell*, and when I disinter it from the chaos of my books I will refer to any notice that may be there in reference to your acquisition—which I return with many thanks.

Yours very sincerely,

ROBERT BROWNING.

* *The Runaway Slave at Pilgrim's Point. By Elizabeth Barrett Browning. London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street. 1849.*—Octavo, pp. 26. One of the most uncommon of the first editions of Mrs. Browning's poems.

LETTER XXXII.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

29, DE VERE GARDENS,
LONDON, W.

February 23rd, 1889.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

By really an unpardonable oversight, I forgot to reply to your question of the day before yesterday, a multiplicity of matters having diverted my attention from it.

The meaning of the passages is much as you say — entirely so, indeed. “Neither body nor mind is born to attain perfect strength or perfect health at its first stage of existence respectively, in each case, by the want of and desire

for the thing as yet out of reach, they get raised towards it, and are educated by the process—as would not happen were the body strong all at once—or the soul at once perfect in apprehension.

“Wishing what I write may be read by their light”—viz. of Shakespeare, Dekker, Heywood and the others mentioned in the preface to *Vittoria Accorambona* by Webster.

Ever, in haste as in leisure,

Yours truly,

R. BROWNING.

LETTER XXXIII.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

29, DE VERE GARDENS,
LONDON, W.

March 2nd, 1889.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

I should prosaically state the meaning thus : I do not ask a full disclosure of Truth, which would be a concession contrary to the law of things, which applies equally to the body and the soul, that it is only by striving to attain strength (in the one case) and truth (in the other) that body and soul do so—the effort (common to both) being productive, in each instance, of the necessary initiation into all the satisfactions which

result from partial success; absolute success being only attainable for the body in full manhood—for the soul, in its full apprehension of Truth—which will be, not *here*, at all events.

The sense is much the same whether you place a comma after “effort,” or leave it out as I have done. “Effort whereby,” or general effort, the result of mind’s striving to urge the body to get strong all at once.

And now, I have to beg you to do me a very serious favour. Read this letter and the accompanying summary of the writer’s husband’s services.* I should be happy to help the poor fellow in the way he wants were I able, but I am not. I cannot apply either to Gladstone or Buckle † just now for very certain reasons, nor to Bright either.

* “The writer’s husband”—Mr. George Barnett Smith, to whom a Civil List pension was ultimately granted.

† The Editor of *The Times*.

Can you contrive simply to bring the matter under Gladstone's notice, he being the person the parties evidently most count upon—I fear, hopelessly? He has not the power now, if he had—as he probably may have—the will; but I can only do, or attempt to do, what is prescribed by the letter. Only, something I am anxious to do, and I want a more efficacious hand than mine to make the effort. I know you will help me if you can. Mr. Barnett Smith wrote many goodnatured notices of me in *The Times*, and other newspapers—which, at least as early advertisements, did good to my books, I have no doubt. At all events forgive my troubling you and believe me,

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

I was much pleased by Mr. Robertson's article. There is another—an essay in a book of which I never heard

till the other day, *Cross Lights*,* by I don't know what person, which highly interested me.

* *Cross Lights* was a volume of essays published in 1888. It was anonymous, but was written by Mr. H. B. Simpson, of the Home Office.

LETTER XXXIV.

To DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

29, DE VERE GARDENS,
LONDON, W.

March 27th, 1889.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

1st question—you answer rightly—except perhaps that the lady, a passionate Italian, means “Whether I shall find a new lover and bestow on him all you despise, and even more—forgetting all else ; or whether I shall not rather bethink myself of taking a thorough revenge on you—that is for after consideration : you are not ‘out of the wood yet ’”!

2nd. St. Mark’s is constructed out

of various objects originally intended to illustrate some other cult than that which, by the superior power of the Christian symbol, has exclusively appropriated earth's homage.

Ever truly yours,

ROBERT BROWNING.

LETTER XXXV.

TO DR. F. J. FURNIVALL.

29, DE VERE GARDENS,
LONDON, W.

July 16th, 1889.

MY DEAR FURNIVALL,

Yes, it is sad to think, as Keats says, that "Honey can't be got without hard money," and literary honey, of whatever the sort, any more than the bee's product. But Smith sells "Collections," and pays me for the right of doing so, while he cannot hinder the Americans from taking them and paying nothing at all—so that you cannot wonder if he is disinclined to allow the payers-of-nothing there to compete with his

publications here, and pay nothing into the bargain. So, "curse nobody, but grin and bear it."

As to my own utterance after receiving unexpectedly an outrage, why, like all impulsive actions, once the impulse over, I believe I might preferably have left the thing to its proper contempt. But there was something too shocking in a man, whom my wife never even heard of, "feeling relieved at her death, he must say"—and I too said what I must. The people who tell you "his opinion was really on the woman question" talk nonsense. He might have uttered any amount of impertinence about women's work in general, and that of my wife in particular, without getting a word out of me—but, "to be relieved at the *death* which would stop the work, thank God."

How Editor and Publisher could let this passage remain in the letter which

a pen-scratch would have left unobjectionable, passes my power of understanding. It is noticeable that the passage is immediately preceded by a sign (. . .) that something considered really objectionable has been omitted : this might pass !

I have your XVth volume, but the XVIth will follow so soon now that I may send them in one packet.

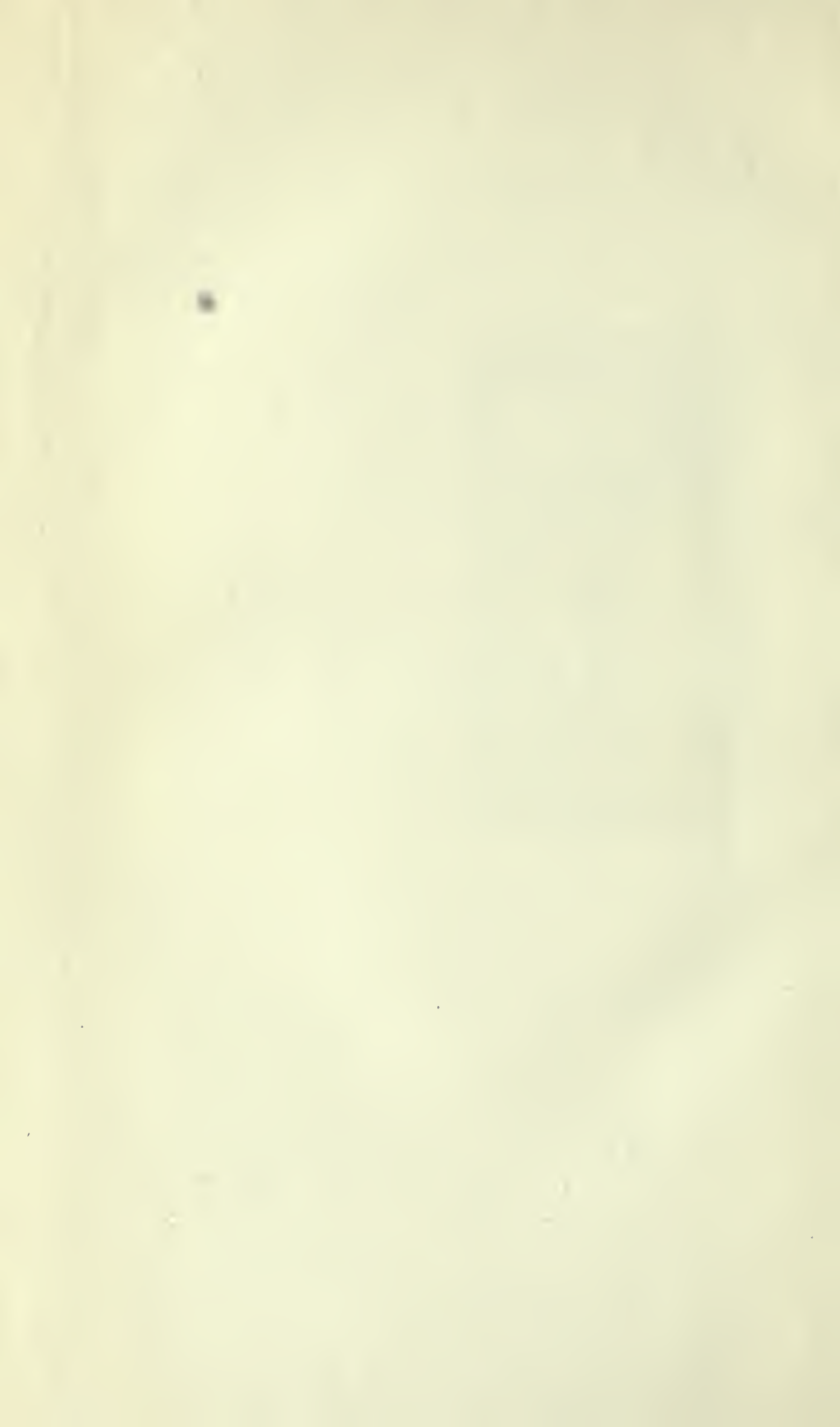
Ever truly yours,

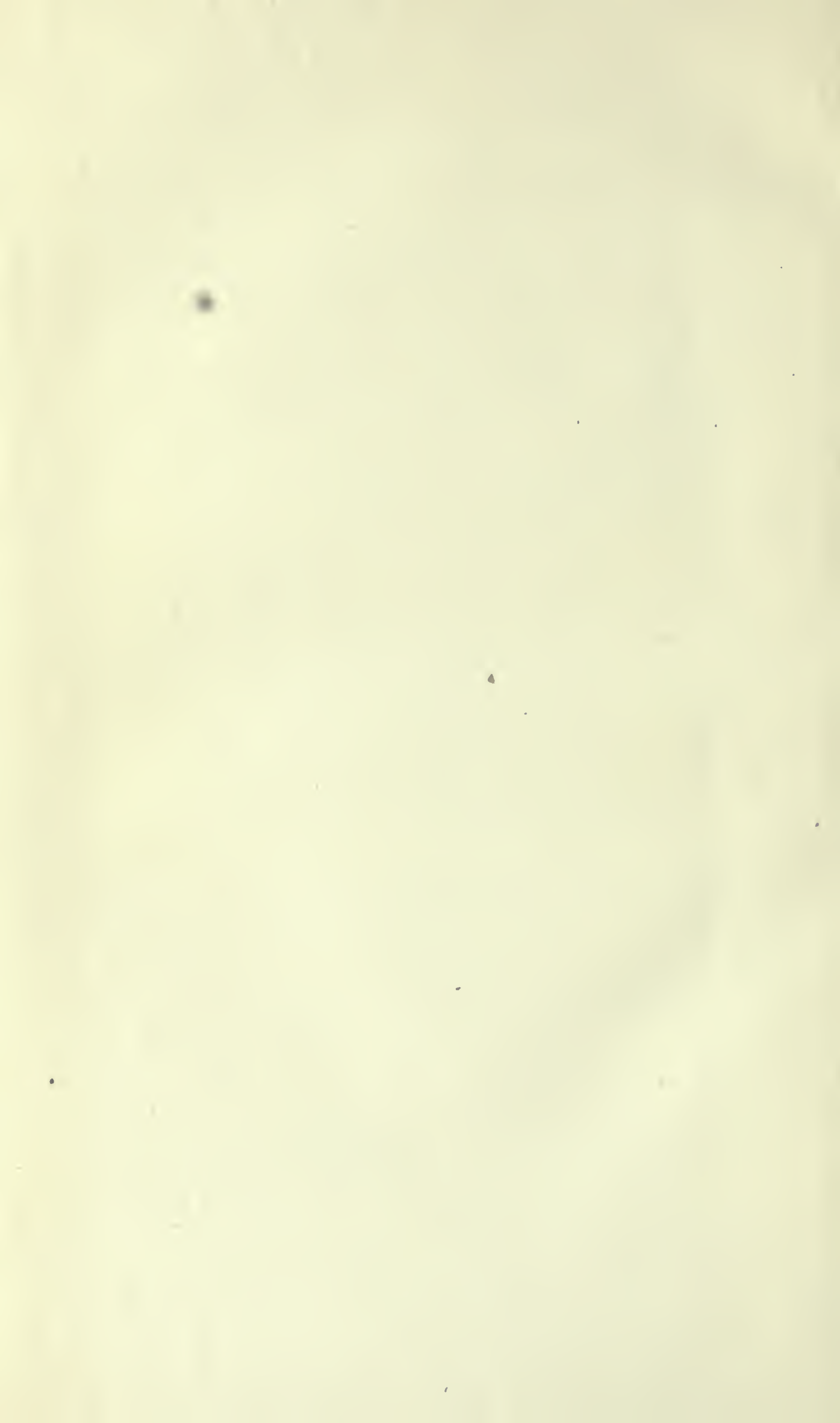
R. BROWNING.

The answers to the Examination paper are perfect : " lasagne " are the long broad ribbon-like strings of macaroni.









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